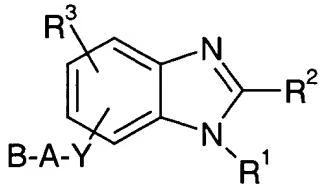
The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method for treating a patient suffering from chronic inflammation comprising administering to said patient an effective amount of a benzimidazole compound of formula II



(II)

or a physiologically compatible salt thereof,

in which

R^1 means a monocyclic or bicyclic C_{6-12} aryl group ~~or a monocyclic or bicyclic 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl group with 1-4 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, wherein when said aryl or heteroaryl group is~~ optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, I, $C(NH)NH_2$, $C(NH)NHR^4$, $C(NH)NR^4R^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NH_2$, $C(NR^4)NHR^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NR^4R^{4'}$, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4,

~~wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl or heteroaryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl~~;

R^2 means a monocyclic or bicyclic C_{6-10} aryl group ~~or a monocyclic or bicyclic 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl group with 1-4 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, wherein said aryl or heteroaryl group is~~ optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, I, $C(NH)NH_2$, $C(NH)NHR^4$, $C(NH)NR^4R^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NH_2$, $C(NR^4)NHR^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NR^4R^{4'}$, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4,

$XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4,

~~wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl or heteroaryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediyl-bisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl~~;

R^3 stands for one or two substituents which are each independently of one another selected from:

hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, I, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONHR^4$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, or 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4,

~~wherein when two substituents R^3 are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl~~;

R^4 and $R^{4'}$, independently of one another, mean C_{1-4} perfluoroalkyl, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, C_{2-6} alkinyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, (C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkyl), C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{6-10} aryl, C_{1-3} alkyl-5 to 10-membered heteroaryl with 1-4 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, C_{6-10} aryl,

or 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl with 1-4 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O atoms, wherein the C_{6-10} aryl and heteroaryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5, or optionally carry an annelated methanediylbisoxy group or ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy group, and wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has an N or O ring member, and wherein a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

R^5 and $R^{5'}$, independently of one another, mean hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, C_{2-6} alkinyl, wherein in each case a carbon atom is optionally replaced by O, S, SO, SO_2, NH, N C_{1-3} alkyl or N C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

C_{3-7} cycloalkyl-C_{0-3} alkyl, wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has an N or O ring member and a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

C_{6-10} aryl or 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl with 1-4 heteroatoms selected from N, S, and O, wherein the mentioned alkyl, alkenyl and alkinyl groups are optionally substituted with one of the previously mentioned cycloalkyls, aryls or heteroaryls,

wherein all previously mentioned alkyl and cycloalkyl radicals are optionally substituted with up to two substituents selected from CF_3, C_2F_5, OH, O C_{1-3} alkyl, NH2, NH C_{1-3} alkyl, NH C_{1-3} alkanoyl, N $(C_{1-3}$ alkyl$)_2$, N$(C_{1-3}$ alkyl$)(C_{1-3}$ alkanoyl), COOH, $CONH_2$, and COO C_{1-3} alkyl, and all previously mentioned aryl and heteroaryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5 or optionally carry an annelated methanediylbisoxy, or ethane-1,2-

diylbisoxy group, or

R^5 and $R^{5'}$ together with the nitrogen atom form a 5-to 7-membered group, which optionally contains another oxygen, nitrogen or sulfur atom and is optionally substituted by C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy-C_{0-2} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy-carbonyl, aminocarbonyl or phenyl,

A means C_{1-10} alkanediyl, C_{2-10} alkenediyl, C_{2-10} alkinediyl, (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkanediyl-C_{0-5} alkanediyl), (C_{0-5} alkanediylarylene-C_{0-5} alkanediyl), or (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-heteroarylene-C_{0-5} alkanediyl),

wherein the aryl and heteroaryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5, wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has a ring member selected from N and O, and a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

wherein in the mentioned aliphatic groups, one or two carbon atoms are each optionally replaced by O, NH, NR^4, $NCOR^4$, or NSO_2R^4,

and wherein alkyl or cycloalkyl groups are optionally substituted with up to two substituents selected from F, OH, OR^4, $OCOR^4$, =O, NH_2, $NR^4R^{4'}$, $NHCOR^4$, $NHCOOR^4$, $NHCONHR^4$, $NHSO_2R^4$ SH, and SR^4,

B means hydrogen, OH, $OCOR^5$, $OCONHR^5$, $OCOOR^5$, COR^5, $C(NOH)R^5$, $C(NOR^5)R^{5'}$, $C(NO(COR^5))R^{5'}$, COOH, $COOR^5$, $CONH_2$, $CONHNH_2$, $CONHR^5$, $CONR^5R^{5'}$, CONHOH, $CONHOR^5$, SO_3H, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^5, $SO_2NR^5R^{5'}$, PO_3H, $PO(OH)(OR^5)$, $PO(OR^5)(OR^{5'})$, $PO(OH)(NHR^5)$, $PO(NHR^5)(NHR^{5'})$, or tetrazolyl, each bonded to a carbon

atom of group A,

or the entire group Y-A-B is $N(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$ or $NHSO_2R^4$,

X means a bond, CH_2, $(CH_2)_2$, $CH(CH_3)$, $(CH_2)_3$, $CH(CH_2CH_3)$, $CH(CH_3)CH_2$, or $CH_2CH(CH_3)$, and

Y means a bond, O, S, SO, SO_2, NH, NR^4, $NCOR^4$, or NSO_2R^4.

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 15, wherein

R^1 means a monocyclic or bicyclic aryl group ~~or a monocyclic or bicyclic 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl group with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, wherein said aryl or heteroaryl group is~~ optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, XCN, COOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, NO_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, or R^4;

~~wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl or heteroaryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl~~.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 15, wherein,

R^2 means a monocyclic or bicyclic aryl group ~~or a monocyclic or bicyclic 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl group with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, wherein said aryl group or heteroaryl group is~~ optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$,

$XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, or R^4;

~~wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl or heteroaryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl or, butane-1,4-diyl~~.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 15, wherein

R^3 stands for one or two substituents, which independently of one another, each mean:

hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$,

$XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$,

XCN, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2,

$XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNHCOR^4$,

$XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, or R^4;

~~wherein when two substituents R^3 are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl or, butane-1,4-diyl~~.

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein

R^4 and $R^{4'}$, independently of one another, mean CF_3, C_2F_5, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{2-4} alkenyl, C_{2-4} alkinyl, C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, (C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{3-6} cycloalkyl), C_{1-3} alkylaryl, C_{1-3} alkylheteroaryl, monocyclic aryl or 5- to 6-membered heteroaryl with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, wherein the aryl and heteroaryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5, or optionally carry an annelated methanediylbisoxy or ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy group, and wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has a ring member selected from N and O, and a 6-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl.

20. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein

R^5 and $R^{5'}$, independently of one another, are optionally C_{1-6} alkyl wherein a carbon atom is optionally replaced by O, NH, N C_{1-3} alkyl, N C_{1-3} alkanoyl, or C_{3-7} cycloalkyl-C_{0-3} alkyl, wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has a ring member selected from N and O, and a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3}

alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl, wherein the mentioned C_{1-6} alkyl group is optionally substituted with one of the previously mentioned cycloalkyls or a 5- to 6-membered heteroaromatic group with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O,

wherein all previously mentioned alkyl and cycloalkyl groups are optionally substituted with up to two substituents selected from CF_3, OH, and O C_{1-3} alkyl, and the previously mentioned heteroaryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, CF_3, CH_3, C_2H_5, OCH_3, and OC_2H_5,

or R^5 and $R^{5'}$ together with the nitrogen atom form a 5- to 7-membered heterocyclic group which optionally contains another oxygen, nitrogen or sulfur atom and is optionally substituted by C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy-C_{0-2} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy-carbonyl, aminocarbonyl or phenyl.

21. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein

A means C_{1-10} alkanediyl, C_{2-10} alkenediyl, C_{2-10} alkinediyl, (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkanediyl-C_{0-5} alkanediyl), or (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-heteroarylene-C_{0-5} alkanediyl), wherein when a heteroaryl group is present it is optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5, and wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has a ring member selected from N and O, and a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

wherein in aliphatic groups one or two carbon atoms are optionally replaced by O, NH, N C_{1-3} alkyl, N C_{1-3} alkanoyl, or NSO_2 C_{1-3} alkyl, and wherein alkyl or cycloalkyl groups are optionally substituted with up to two F atoms or by one of the substituents selected from OH, O C_{1-3} alkyl, O C_{1-3} alkanoyl, =O, NH_2, NH C_{1-3} alkyl, N (C_{1-3} alkyl)$_2$, NH C_{1-3} alkanoyl, N (C_{1-3} alkyl) (C_{1-3} alkanoyl), NHCOO C_{1-3} alkyl, NHCONH C_{1-3} alkyl, $NHSO_2$ C_{1-3} alkyl, SH, and S C_{1-3} alkyl.

22. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein

B means hydrogen, OH, $OCOR^5$, $OCONHR^5$, $OCOOR^5$, COOH, $COOR^5$, $CONH_2$, $CONHR^5$, $CONR^5R^{5'}$, CONHOH, $CONHOR^5$, or

tetrazolyl, in each case bonded to a carbon atom of group A.

23. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein

X means a bond or CH_2.

24. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein

Y means a bond, O, S, NH, NR^4, $NCOR^4$ or NSO_2R^4.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein said compound is 6-[[1-(4-methylphenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-benzimdazol-6-yl]oxy] hexanoic isopropyl ester.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 15, wherein

R^1 is a monocyclic or bicyclic aryl group ~~or a monocyclic or bicyclic 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl group with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from the group N, S and O, wherein said aryl or heteroaryl group is~~ optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, XCN, COOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, NO_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, and R^4,

~~wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl or heteroaryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl~~;

R^2 means a monocyclic or bicyclic aryl group ~~or a monocyclic or bicyclic 5- to 10-membered heteroaryl group with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, wherein said aryl group or heteroaryl group is~~ optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$,

$XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, and R^4,

~~wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl or heteroaryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl or, butane-1,4-diyl~~;

R^3 is one or two substituents, which independently of one another, each mean: hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, or R^4;

~~wherein when two substituents R^3 are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or, butane-1,4-diyl~~;

R^4 and $R^{4'}$, independently of one another, mean CF_3, C_2F_5, C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{2-4} alkenyl, C_{2-4} alkinyl, C_{3-6} cycloalkyl, (C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{3-6} cycloalkyl), C_{1-3} alkylaryl, C_{1-3} alkylheteroaryl, monocyclic aryl or 5- to 6-membered heteroaryl with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O, wherein the aryl and heteroaryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5 or optionally carry an annelated methanediylbisoxy or ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy group, and wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has a ring member selected from N and O, and a 6-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl;

R^5 and $R^{5'}$, independently of one another, are C_{1-6} alkyl wherein a carbon atom is optionally replaced by O, NH, N C_{1-3} alkyl, N C_{1-3} alkanoyl, or C_{3-7} cycloalkyl-C_{0-3} alkyl, wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has a ring member selected from N and O, and a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

wherein the mentioned C_{1-6} alkyl group is optionally substituted with one of the previously mentioned cycloalkyls or a 5- to 6-membered heteroaromatic group with 1-2 heteroatoms selected from N, S and O,

wherein all previously mentioned alkyl and cycloalkyl groups are optionally substituted with up to two substituents selected from CF_3, OH, and O C_{1-3} alkyl, and the previously mentioned heteroaryl groups are optionally ~~be~~ substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, CF_3, CH_3, C_2H_5, OCH_3, and OC_2H_5, or

R^5 and $R^{5'}$ together with the nitrogen atom form a 5- to 7-membered heterocyclic group which optionally contains another oxygen, nitrogen or sulfur atom and is optionally substituted by C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy-C_{0-2} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy-carbonyl, aminocarbonyl or phenyl;

A means C_{1-10} alkanediyl, C_{2-10} alkenediyl, C_{2-10} alkinediyl, (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkanediyl-C_{0-5} alkanediyl), or (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-heteroarylene-C_{0-5} alkanediyl), wherein when a heteroaryl group is present it is optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5, and wherein a 5-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has a ring member selected from N and O, and a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyl ring optionally has one or two ring members selected from N and O, wherein ring nitrogens optionally are substituted with C_{1-3} alkyl or C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

wherein in aliphatic groups one or two carbon atoms are optionally replaced by O, NH, N C_{1-3} alkyl, N C_{1-3} alkanoyl, or NSO_2 C_{1-3} alkyl, and wherein alkyl or cycloalkyl groups are optionally substituted with up to two F atoms or by one of the substituents selected from OH, O C_{1-3} alkyl, O C_{1-3} alkanoyl, =O, NH_2, NH C_{1-3} alkyl, N (C_{1-3} alkyl)$_2$, NH C_{1-3} alkanoyl, N (C_{1-3} alkyl) (C_{1-3} alkanoyl), NHCOO C_{1-3} alkyl, NHCONH C_{1-3} alkyl, $NHSO_2$ C_{1-3} alkyl, SH, and S C_{1-3} alkyl;

B means hydrogen, OH, $OCOR^5$, $OCONHR^5$, $OCOOR^5$, COOH, $COOR^5$, $CONH_2$, $CONHR^5$, $CONR^5R^{5'}$, CONHOH, $CONHOR^5$, or tetrazolyl, in each case bonded to a carbon atom of group A;

X means a bond or CH_2; and

Y means a bond, O, S, NH, NR^4, $NCOR^4$ or NSO_2R^4.

30. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 15, wherein

(a) in R^1, R^2, ~~R^4, $R^{4'}$, R^5 and $R^{5'}$~~, said aryl groups are substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, biphenyl, naphthyl, indane, or fluorenyl~~, and said heteroaryl group are substituted or unsubstituted pyrrolyl, thienyl, furanyl, imidazolyl, thiazolyl, isothiazolyl, oxazolyl, isoxazolyl, pyrazolyl, furazanyl, pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrazinyl, pyridazinyl, thienoimidazolyl, indolyl, isoindolyl, benzothiophenyl, benzofuranyl, benzimidazolyl, indazolyl, imidazopyridinyl, purinyl, quinolyl, isoquinolyl, phthalazinyl, quinazolinyl, quinaxolinyl, cinnolinyl, naphthyridinyl or pteridinyl~~; and

(b) in R^4, $R^{4'}$, R^5 and $R^{5'}$, said aryl groups are substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, biphenyl, naphthyl, indane, or fluorenyl, and said heteroaryl group are substituted or unsubstituted pyrrolyl, thienyl, furanyl, imidazolyl, thiazolyl, isothiazolyl, oxazolyl, isoxazolyl, pyrazolyl, furazanyl, pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrazinyl, pyridazinyl, thienoimidazolyl, indolyl, isoindolyl, benzothiophenyl, benzofuranyl, benzimidazolyl, indazolyl, imidazopyridinyl, purinyl, quinolyl, isoquinolyl, phthalazinyl, quinazolinyl, quinaxolinyl, cinnolinyl, naphthyridinyl or pteridinyl.

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein

R^1 is a monocyclic or bicyclic $C_{6\text{-}12}$ aryl group which is unsubstituted or is substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, I, $C(NH)NH_2$, $C(NH)NHR^4$, $C(NH)NR^4R^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NH_2$, $C(NR^4)NHR^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NR^4R^{4'}$, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$,

$XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4;

R^2 is a monocyclic or bicyclic C_{6-10} aryl group which is unsubstituted or is subsituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, I, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONHR^4$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4;

R^3 is one or two substituents which are independently of one another selected from:

hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, I, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONHR^4$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4;

R^4 and $R^{4'}$, independently of one another, are each C_{1-4} perfluoroalkyl, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, C_{2-6} alkinyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{6-10} aryl, or C_{6-10} aryl, wherein aryl groups are unsubstituted or substituted by one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5,

R^5 and $R^{5'}$, independently of one another, are each

C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, or C_{2-6} alkinyl, wherein in each case a carbon atom is optionally replaced by O, S, SO, SO_2, NH, N C_{1-3} alkyl or N C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

C_{3-7} cycloalkyl-C_{0-3} alkyl, or

C_{6-10} aryl;

A is C_{1-10} alkanediyl, C_{2-10} alkenediyl, C_{2-10} alkinediyl, or (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkanediyl-C_{0-5} alkanediyl),

wherein in the alkanediyl, alkenediyl, and alkinediyl groups a carbon atom or two carbon atoms are optionally replaced by O, NH, NC_{1-3} alkyl, or NC_{1-3} alkanoyl, and wherein alkanediyl and cycloalkanediyl groups are optionally substituted with up to two substituents selected from =O, OH, OC_{1-3} alkyl, NH_2, NHC_{1-3} alkyl, NHC_{1-3} alkanoyl, $N(C_{1-3}$ alkyl$)_2$, and $N(C_{1-3}$ alkyl$)(C_{1-3}$ alkanoyl); and

B is COOH, $COOR^5$, $CONH_2$, $CONHNH_2$, $CONHR^5$, $CONR^5R^{5'}$, CONHOH, $CONHOR^5$, SO_3H, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^5, $SO_2NR^5R^{5'}$, PO_3H, $PO(OH)(OR^5)$, $PO(OR^5)(OR^{5'})$, $PO(OH)(NHR^5)$, or $PO(NHR^5)(NHR^{5'})$, in each case bonded to a carbon atom of group A, or

the entire group Y-A-B is $N(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$ or $NHSO_2R^4$.

33. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein said patient is suffering from neuro inflammation.

34. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein said patient is suffering from a stroke.

35. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 32, wherein said compound is 6-[[1-(4-methylphenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-benzimdazol-6-yl]oxy] hexanoic isopropyl

ester.

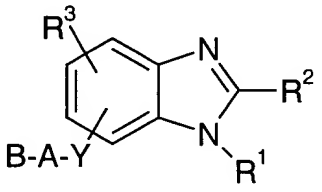
36. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 32, wherein said compound is 6-[[1-(4-methylphenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-benzimdazol-6-yl]oxy] hexanoic isopropyl ester.

37. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein said patient is suffering from neurohal dysfunction or degeneration.

38. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 15, wherein said patient is suffering from neurohal Alzheimer's disease.

39. (Cancelled)

40. (Previously Presented) A method for treating a patient suffering from a disease associated with microglia activation comprising administering to said patient an effective amount of a benzimidazole compound of formula II



(II)

or a physiologically compatible salt thereof,

in which

R^1 means a monocyclic or bicyclic C_{6-12} aryl group, wherein when said aryl group is optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, I, $C(NH)NH_2$, $C(NH)NHR^4$, $C(NH)NR^4R^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NH_2$, $C(NR^4)NHR^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NR^4R^{4'}$, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4,

wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl;

R^2 means a monocyclic or bicyclic C_{6-10} aryl group, wherein said aryl group is optionally substituted with up to three of the following substituents, independently of one another selected from:

F, Cl, Br, I, $C(NH)NH_2$, $C(NH)NHR^4$, $C(NH)NR^4R^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NH_2$, $C(NR^4)NHR^{4'}$, $C(NR^4)NR^4R^{4'}$, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, $XCONHR^4$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4,

wherein when two of said substituents for the aryl group are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediyl-bisoxy, ethane-

1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl;

R^3 stands for one or two substituents which are each independently of one another selected from:

hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, I, XOH, XOR^4, $XOCOR^4$, $XOCONHR^4$, $XOCOOR^4$, $XCOR^4$, $XC(NOH)R^4$, $XC(NOR^4)R^{4'}$, $XC(NO(COR^4))R^{4'}$, XCN, XCOOH, $XCOOR^4$, $XCONH_2$, $XCONHR^4$, $XCONR^4R^{4'}$, XCONHOH, $XCONHOR^4$, $XCOSR^4$, XSR^4, $XSOR^4$, XSO_2R^4, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^4, $SO_2NR^4R^{4'}$, NO_2, XNH_2, $XNHR^4$, $XNR^4R^{4'}$, $XNHSO_2R^4$, $XNR^4SO_2R^{4'}$, $XN(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$, $XNHCOR^4$, $XNHCOOR^4$, $XNHCONHR^4$, tetrahydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, or 2,5-dihydro-2,5-dioxopyrrol-1-yl, 2,7-dihydro-2,7-dioxoisoindol-1-yl, and R^4,

wherein when two substituents R^3 are in ortho-position to one another, they are optionally linked to one another to jointly form methanediylbisoxy, ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy, propane-1,3-diyl, or butane-1,4-diyl;

R^4 and $R^{4'}$, independently of one another, mean C_{1-4} perfluoroalkyl, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, C_{2-6} alkinyl, C_{3-7} cycloalkyl, (C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkyl), C_{1-3} alkyl-C_{6-10} aryl, or C_{6-10} aryl, wherein the C_{6-10} aryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5, or optionally carry an annelated methanediylbisoxy group or ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy group,

R^5 and $R^{5'}$, independently of one another, mean hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, C_{2-6} alkinyl, wherein in each case a carbon atom is optionally replaced by O, S, SO, SO_2, NH, N C_{1-3} alkyl or N C_{1-3} alkanoyl,

C_{3-7} cycloalkyl-C_{0-3} alkyl, or

C_{6-10} aryl,

wherein the mentioned alkyl, alkenyl and alkinyl groups are optionally substituted with one of the previously mentioned cycloalkyls or aryls,

wherein all previously mentioned alkyl and cycloalkyl radicals are optionally substituted with up to two substituents selected from CF_3, C_2F_5, OH, O C_{1-3} alkyl, NH2, NH C_{1-3} alkyl, NH C_{1-3} alkanoyl, N (C_{1-3} alkyl)$_2$, N(C_{1-3} alkyl)(C_{1-3} alkanoyl), COOH, $CONH_2$, and COO C_{1-3} alkyl, and all previously mentioned aryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5 or optionally carry an annelated methanediylbisoxy, or ethane-1,2-diylbisoxy group,

A means C_{1-10} alkanediyl, C_{2-10} alkenediyl, C_{2-10} alkinediyl, (C_{0-5} alkanediyl-C_{3-7} cycloalkanediyl-C_{0-5} alkanediyl), or (C_{0-5} alkanediylarylene-C_{0-5} alkanediyl),

wherein the aryl groups are optionally substituted with one or two substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CH_3, C_2H_5, NO_2, OCH_3, OC_2H_5, CF_3, and C_2F_5,

wherein in the mentioned aliphatic groups, one or two carbon atoms are each optionally replaced by O, NH, NR^4, $NCOR^4$, or NSO_2R^4,

and wherein alkyl or cycloalkyl groups are optionally substituted with up to two substituents selected from F, OH, OR^4, $OCOR^4$, =O, NH_2, $NR^4R^{4'}$, $NHCOR^4$, $NHCOOR^4$, $NHCONHR^4$, $NHSO_2R^4$ SH, and SR^4,

B means hydrogen, OH, $OCOR^5$, $OCONHR^5$, $OCOOR^5$, COR^5, $C(NOH)R^5$, $C(NOR^5)R^{5'}$, $C(NO(COR^5))R^{5'}$, COOH, $COOR^5$, $CONH_2$, $CONHNH_2$, $CONHR^5$, $CONR^5R^{5'}$, CONHOH, $CONHOR^5$, SO_3H, SO_2NH_2, SO_2NHR^5, $SO_2NR^5R^{5'}$, PO_3H, $PO(OH)(OR^5)$, $PO(OR^5)(OR^{5'})$, $PO(OH)(NHR^5)$, $PO(NHR^5)(NHR^{5'})$, or tetrazolyl, each bonded to a carbon

atom of group A,

or the entire group Y-A-B is $N(SO_2R^4)(SO_2R^{4'})$ or $NHSO_2R^4$,

X means a bond, CH_2, $(CH_2)_2$, $CH(CH_3)$, $(CH_2)_3$, $CH(CH_2CH_3)$, $CH(CH_3)CH_2$, or $CH_2CH(CH_3)$, and

Y means a bond, O, S, SO, SO_2, NH, NR^4, $NCOR^4$, or NSO_2R^4.

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Currently Amended) A method for treating a patient suffering from a disease associated with ~~microglia activation~~chronic inflammation according to claim 15, comprising administering to said patient an effective amount of a benzimidazole compound of formula II wherein all heterocyclic groups are selected from pyridinyl, pyridyl, thienyl, imidazol, indonyl, furyl, pyrrolidin, morpholin, piperidin, and piperazine.